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# Executive Summary

## Vision for the Greenways System

The vision for the Asheville Greenways System is a network of land and water corridors in Asheville, with greenways serving to protect and promote the qualities of these corridors, places where land connects to water; people connect to nature; people connect to parks; home connects to work, school and shops; and city connects to countryside.

This vision for greenways in Asheville can be achieved through implementation of this Greenways Master Plan. The Plan provides background information and action steps for establishing greenways in Asheville to provide transportation, environmental, health, recreation, economic, educational, cultural, water quality and quantity, air quality and habitat preservation benefits. Greenways can improve the quality of life throughout the community, maintaining Asheville as a desirable place to visit, live, and work.

Greenways can help continue to make Asheville an attractive community for sustainable development well into the 21st Century.



### **What is a Greenway?**

Greenways are corridors of natural land recognized for their ability to connect people and places together. Greenways improve water quality by establishing vegetated buffers along creeks and streams which filter pollutants and provide plant and animal habitat. Multi-use trails can be developed within greenways, adding to an area's recreational resources, providing routes for alternative transportation, encouraging economic growth, and improving the overall quality of life.

Planning for greenways is not a new concept in Asheville. Beginning with John Nolen's *City Plan of 1922*, and continuing to the present day, numerous individuals and organizations (including the City and Riverlink) have worked to provide greenways in Asheville. These past planning and development efforts have led to the initiation of this Greenways Master Plan.

### **The Master Planning Process**

The City of Asheville obtained the services of the Trust for Public Land and Greenways Incorporated to assist the community in developing a Greenways Master Plan. The planning process for the Master Plan consisted of seven primary tasks. A site evaluation of the City of Asheville and potential greenway corridors was undertaken first, along with the formation of an Asheville Greenways Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). Committee members included more than thirty representatives of City departments, other local agencies, non-profit organizations and interested citizens, who provided focused feedback and input throughout the planning process. The formation of a vision, goals and objectives took place next, crafted by comments received from the CAC and participants of two community workshops. Preliminary recommendations for greenways in Asheville were then developed and presented to members of the City Council, CAC and participants of

two additional community workshops for review. Recommendations were revised by the CAC and by City Council and presented once again for review by residents at two final public workshops. The last step of the planning process was the presentation of the final plan to the City Council.

### **Recommendations**

The future greenways system in Asheville is envisioned as a multi-objective system. Greenway corridors in Asheville should fulfill multiple objectives, including better floodplain management, protecting wildlife habitat, improving water quality, providing for passive recreation, encouraging environmental and cultural education, promoting personal fitness, and accommodating alternative transportation, in addition to serving as recreational resources.

Recommendations for a system of multi-objective greenways in Asheville are based largely on community input from the general public, businesses, civic and community organizations, and public agencies. Proposed greenway corridors are located along natural and man-made linear corridors which generally follow roadways, ridgetops and waterways within the study limits. Corridors were selected to ensure development of a continuous system of on- and off-road greenways located throughout North, South, East, West and Central Asheville which could extend into neighboring jurisdictions.



A total of 14 corridors are proposed as the primary greenway system for Asheville (please refer to map):

Hominy Creek	Brevard Road
French Broad River	Haywood Road
Swannanoa River	Haw Creek
Beaverdam Creek	Kimberly Avenue
Town Mountain Road	Hendersonville Road
Emma Road Stream	Nasty Branch
Ashland Avenue/McDowell Street	
Reed Creek/Broadway Avenue	

The remaining corridors are considered neighborhood greenways and serve as an enhancement of, and addition to, the primary system. Together, the primary system and neighborhood greenways make up the entire proposed Asheville Greenway System.

This Plan is intended to serve as a “living document” to be used as a reference guide for greenway development in

Asheville for years to come. To this end, design guidelines for greenways and associated amenities are included for all levels of greenway use. These guidelines should be consulted as greenways are developed to ensure a consistent, high quality system.



*In May 1998, readers of the Mountain Express, a local newspaper, voted greenways the “best use of local tax dollars” in Asheville.*

There are five different levels of use that could occur along each of the proposed greenway corridors. Future community input and site specific conditions will determine level of use for each corridor. They are:

- Level 1: No Facility Development
- Level 2: Limited Development, Low Impact Uses
- Level 3: Multi-use Unpaved Trail Development
- Level 4: Multi-Use Paved Trail Development
- Level 5: On-road Sidewalks and Bikeways

## Plan of Action

The Asheville Greenways Master Plan is a comprehensive, visionary plan which identifies potential greenway corridors throughout the City and proposes specific action steps to establish these greenways in two-year, five-year and ten-year timeframes. To realize the vision laid forth in this plan, the following steps will need to be completed for each greenway corridor: land protection, master planning, design development, construction, and maintenance. Refer to the accompanying chart for information on the action plan.

## Implementation Strategy

The Asheville Greenways Master Plan will best be implemented through a public-private partnership. Successful implementation will require a concerted effort by the City of Asheville and private citizens. Implementation of the greenway program should not be the sole burden of the City; to be truly successful it must become the collective pursuit of the entire community.



According to a telephone survey of 401 citizens, 90% of residents support the development of a greenway system in Asheville.

A private, non-profit 501 (c)(3) corporation will be formed to serve as a parks, recreation and greenways foundation to raise money from the private sector for use on parks, recreation and greenway projects. The City of Asheville will create a new Greenways Advisory Commission, also comprised of private citizens, to help prioritize greenway projects in the Greenway Master Plan, recommend projects and funding amounts to City Council, assist in right-of-way acquisition and, otherwise, be strong advocates for greenways. City staff will perform planning, design and management functions for the greenway system. Staff will work closely with both the non-profit corporation and Greenways Advisory Commission described above.

The Asheville Greenways program will be a new initiative that requires a fresh look at how local dollars are spent to fulfill community-wide objectives. Greenways as a functional land use can lower short- and long-term community costs and provide financial return on money the community invests in infrastructure, transportation, recreation and education. Based on the expenditures of similar communities, it is recommended that the City set aside at least \$500,000 per year, depending on the availability of funds, to be used as seed money for greenway planning, acquisition, and development. When matched with \$500,000 of other public and private funds (as identified in this Plan), this \$1 million amount will contribute to the development of a minimum of two miles of greenway per year, as recommended in this Plan. Additional funding for greenway acquisition and capital improvements could also come from a potential bond referendum.

**Phase I (1998-2000)      Phase II (2001-2003)      Phase III (2004-2008)**

<b>Land Protection</b>	Reed Creek/Broadway Haw Creek French Broad River Brevard Road Swannanoa River Haywood Road	Hominy Creek Hendersonville Road Nasty Branch	Beaverdam Creek Emma Road Stream
<b>Corridor Master Planning</b>	Reed Creek/Broadway Haw Creek Swannanoa River Brevard Road Haywood Road	Hendersonville Road Hominy Creek Kimberly Avenue Nasty Branch	Beaverdam Creek Town Mountain Road Emma Road Stream Ashland/McDowell Street
<b>Design Development</b>	French Broad River Brevard Road Haw Creek Reed Creek/Broadway Haywood Road	Swannanoa River Haywood Road Kimberly Avenue Nasty Branch	Hominy Creek Beaverdam Creek Town Mountain Road Emma Road Stream Ashland/McDowell Street Hendersonville Road
<b>Construction and Development</b>	French Broad River Haw Creek Reed Creek/Broadway Haywood Road	Swannanoa River Haywood Road Kimberly Avenue Brevard Road	Hominy Creek Nasty Branch Beaverdam Creek Town Mountain Road Emma Road Stream Ashland/McDowell Street Hendersonville Road

Action Steps for implementing the Greenways Master Plan

